

research snapshot

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Individuals' History of Low Income Is a Key Determinant of Type 2 Diabetes



What is this research about?

Type 2 diabetes (T2DM) has seen increased prevalence both globally and in Canada. Research also speaks on the influence of low socioeconomic status - especially low income - on the prevalence of T2DM. However, less is known about the impact of low income on the incidence of T2DM. This research examines the influence of experiencing low income over time on the development of T2DM.

What did the researchers do?

The researchers analyzed data from the National Population Health Survey conducted by Statistics Canada between 1994 and 2007. They created an algorithm to track those respondents who developed T2DM over the 12 year study period and explored whether this change in health status could be attributed to their history of low income. The researchers studied the relationship between low income and T2DM onset by taking into account key determinants of diabetes: demographic factors (age, sex), health behaviour factors (obesity, physical activity), and psychosocial factors (psychological distress). Low income status was measured using the low-income cut-off (LICO) produced by Statistics

What you need to know:

People who experience low income status are at a higher risk of type 2 diabetes.

Canada. A second set of low income measures was developed to provide a perspective on individuals' history of low income: experience of low income at least once before getting diabetes and cumulative number of years in low income before diabetes onset.

What did the researchers find?

The data revealed that being in low income prior to developing T2DM was linked to a 77% higher risk of T2DM. The association between low income and T2DM incidence remains significant even after adjusting for age, sex, health behaviours, and psychological distress. Furthermore, the results also showed that people who more often experienced low income have a higher risk of diabetes. These findings call attention to the primary effect of persistent low income on diabetes incidence that cannot be explained entirely by the behavioural factors.

How can you use this research?

Public health and health care authorities concerned with reducing the incidence of T2DM may find the study's results important for future practice and research. The findings suggest a shift in the strategies for diabetes prevention from the traditional behavioural model to a focus on changing the socio-economic environments.

About the Researchers

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Citation

Dinca-Panaitescu, M., Dinca-Panaitescu, S., Raphael, D., Bryant, T., Pilkington, B., & Daiski, I. (2012). The dynamics of the relationship between diabetes incidence and low income longitudinal results from Canada's National Population Health Survey. *Maturitas*, 27(3), 229-236. Available online at bit.ly/OZmhfy

Keywords

Type 2 diabetes, Socioeconomic status, Low income, Diabetes incidence, Social determinants of health

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York's Knowledge Mobilization Unit provides services for faculty, graduate students, community and government seeking to maximize the impact of academic research and expertise on public policy, social programming, and professional practice. This summary has been supported by the Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation at York and project funding from SSHRC and CIHR.

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